



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 6/13/2005

GAIN Report Number: JA5035

Japan

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Japan Releases Final Draft of Provisional Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)

2005

Approved by:

Rachel Nelson
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Rachel Nelson

Report Highlights:

Japan released its "Final Draft of Provisional Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for Agricultural Chemicals in Foods" for public comment. Public comments are due August 2, 2005. The final MRLs will be published in November 2005 and final enforcement of the new MRLs will begin in May 2006.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tokyo [JA1]
[JA]

Background

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) is in the process of implementing a "positive list system" of allowable chemical residues. This system will prohibit the distribution of foods that contain agricultural chemicals if maximum residue limits (MRLs) for that chemical have not been established. MHLW released the first draft of provisional MRLs for public comment in October of 2003 and the second draft in August of 2004. The details were explained in GAIN reports JA3071 and JA4056, and JA4067.

Newest Draft

Japan released the Final Draft of Provisional Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for public comment. It is available in English on the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare website at:

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/mrls/final/index.html>

Public comments are due August 2, 2005.

Instructions For Public Comments

Comments can be sent directly to the Japanese Government until August 2, 2005. The form that should be used is provided on the website listed in the above section.

via mail to : Residual Agricultural Chemicals/Milk, Meat and Fish Regulation
Standards and Evaluation Division
Department of Food Safety
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
1-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
100-8916, JAPAN

or via e-mail to: positivelist2@mhlw.go.jp (text files only)

MHLW asks that comments:

- 1) Include the title, "Comments on the Final Draft of Provisional MRL's"
- 2) Include underlying rationale for given comments and any documents or data to support this rationale
- 3) Be submitted in Japanese if possible, but English is also acceptable.
- 4) Include the name (or company name), address, and occupation of submitting party. Please note that comments and names may be made public but addresses and e-mails will not.

To be considered for inclusion into the Official U.S. Government Comments, interested parties may send their comments, well before the deadline, to:

Food Safety and Technical Services
International Trade Policy Division
USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
Fax: 202-690-0677
Email: fstsd@fas.usda.

Purely clarification questions can also be directed to the U.S. Embassy, Tokyo at AgTokyo@fas.usda.gov. If the comments are received before July 15, the Embassy can try to get a response back before the end of the public comment period.

Next Steps

MHLW will notify the Final Draft to the WTO within the next few weeks. Because the WTO comment period is 60 days, there will be a few additional weeks past the August 2nd deadline for the U.S. Government to comment, through the WTO channels. After that MHLW and relevant subcommittees will review the comments and publish the final provisional list in their Official Gazette in November 2005. After that there will be a six month grace period before implementation and enforcement of the new regulations. The new MRLs are scheduled to be enforced starting sometime in May 2006, and any residues not on the provisional or final lists of chemicals will be illegal after that.